

Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) gave the following statement in opposition of H.R. 3409 The Stop the War on Coal Act:

It's like we're stuck in some sort of time warp – a Groundhog Day to end all Groundhog Days.

This House has voted 302 times to block action to address climate change, to halt efforts to reduce air and water pollution, to undermine protections for public lands and coastal areas, and to weaken the protection of the environment in other ways.

But, not everybody's got their head in the sand. Richard Muller, a physicist at the University of California, Berkeley, and a prominent climate change skeptic recently announced a change in his stance on the issue.

"Call me a converted skeptic," he wrote this July. "Three years ago I identified problems in previous climate studies that, in my mind, threw doubt on the very existence of global warming. Last year, following an intensive research effort involving a dozen scientists, I concluded that global warming was real and that the prior estimates of the rate of warming were correct. I'm now going a step further: *Humans are almost entirely the cause.*"

The debate is over. Climate change is real. But this bill ignores sound science, and would actually speed up climate change rather than slow it down. This bill, despite sound science, tells us that we should decrease ozone standards nationally, and increase the risk of skin cancer.

This bill, despite sound science, tells us that the new CAFE standards – supported by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, the automobile industry, states and others – aren't worth the 2.2 million barrels of oil per day that would be saved; Or worth the \$1 per gallon consumer savings that would be achieved by 2025;

Denying climate science, eliminating the EPA's ability to reduce carbon pollution, killing the high-paying, long-term green industry jobs we're working so hard to create, endangering public health by allowing coal ash and mountaintop mining removal materials to pollute our valleys and streams – These are not new topics to this Congress.

These are all bills we've passed before, bills that have no hope in the Senate, no hope on the President's desk, and no hope to do any good for this country. What would be new is a solution-oriented policy discussion surrounding the extension of the Production Tax Credit, or PTC, which provides tax incentives for clean, renewable energy sources.

I oppose today's bill, as I've opposed these devastating measures in the past, and will continue to fight to bring the PTC successfully across the finish line.

If this so-called "war on coal" was really all about jobs, then we'd be leaving in place important rules like the Mercury Air Toxics Standard, which actually creates jobs, as do all of the rules that pertain to pollution controls – jobs in expert science industries.

But we've become so focused on repeal, repeal, repeal, that we fail to listen to utility and energy industry experts who tell us that their bottom line is being impacted by this fervor to eliminate rules and regulations for fair play.

We fail to listen to nearly 100 prominent economists – including Nobel Prize winners Joseph Stiglitz, Kenneth Arrow and Robert Solow – who tell us we've got the tools of job creation at hand.

"The Antiquities Act of 1906," these economic leaders wrote in a letter to the President last fall, "would establish new national parks and monuments that can be one of the quickest ways to spur local hiring and build productive communities."

When the Antiquities Act of 1906 was established, Teddy Roosevelt was fighting with Congress

over the importance of preserving the Grand Canyon as a national park.

Way back when, the fight was whether to preserve the canyon or mine it for zinc, copper, asbestos and the like. Sounds a lot like today. A similar threat loomed over the Canyons this year, where international and domestic mining companies were clamoring for the rights to extract uranium from the nearby national forest.

That was, until the President and Secretary Salazar instated a plan to ban new uranium and other mining claims on 1 million acres of federal lands bordering the Grand Canyon for the next 20 years. It is my humble estimation that President Roosevelt would approve these efforts, and so do I.

"We regard attic temples and Roman triumphal arches and Gothic cathedrals as a priceless value," Roosevelt wrote. "But we are, as a whole, still in that low state of civilization where we do not understand that it is also vandalism wantonly – to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff or forest, or a species of mammal or bird."

Mountaintop mining, ocean acidification, epidemic rates of asthma – this destruction of nature is economic destruction at best, and vandalism at worst. Land, water, air – our economy, our lives – they're all at stake today.

I oppose this bill, I oppose this sentiment to cast aside rules and laws that preserve and protect, and I ask my colleagues to join me in the fight for green, clean energy.

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